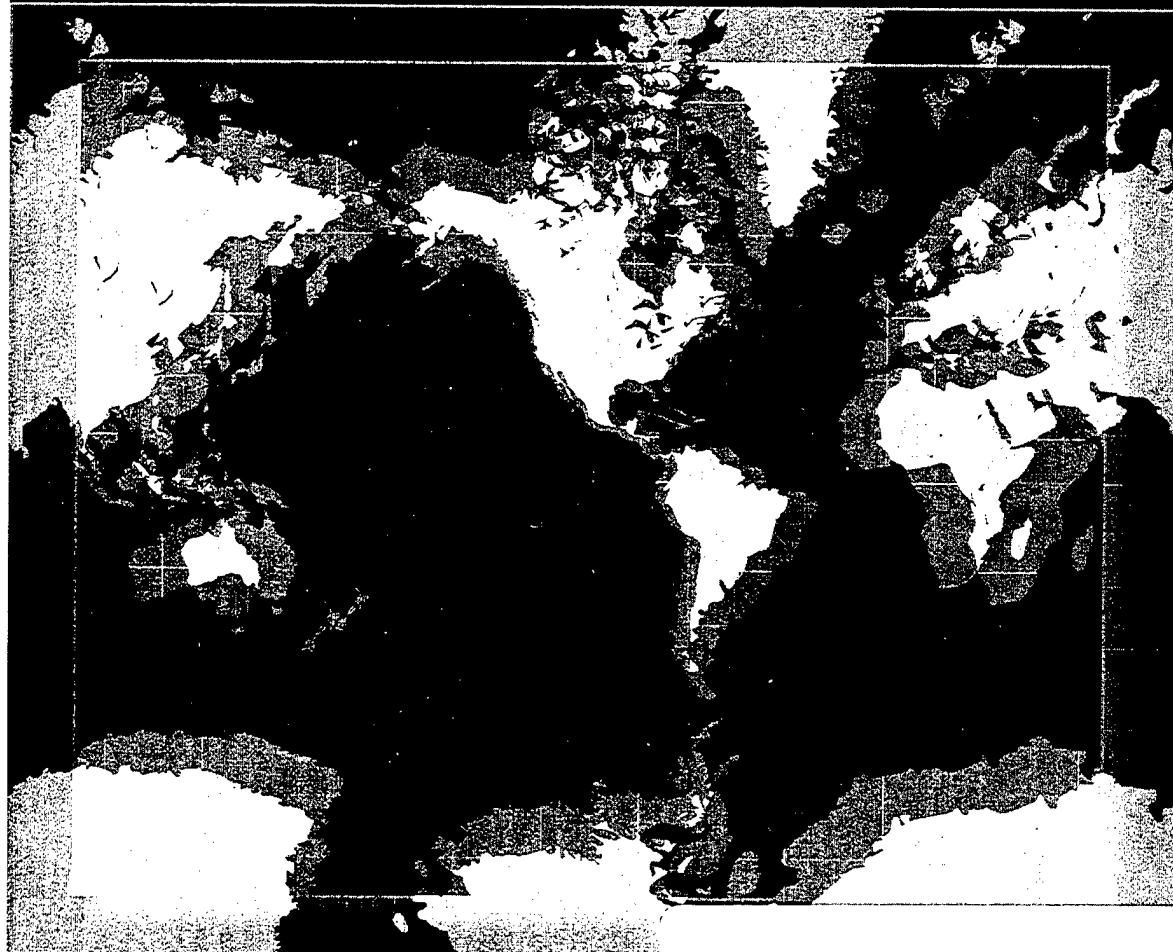


**SPECIAL SERIES:**  
**INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**



DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:  
Approved for Public Release -  
Distribution Unlimited

**INSURGENCY IN NEPAL**  
**THOMAS A. MARKS**

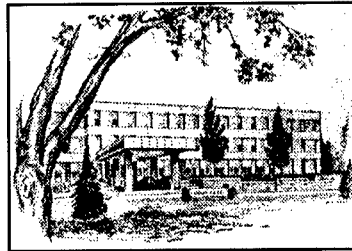
20040204 264

Strategic Studies Institute **SSI**



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE

## **STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE**



The Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) is part of the U.S. Army War College and is the strategic level study agent for issues related to national security and military strategy with emphasis on geostrategic analysis.

The mission of SSI is to use independent analysis to conduct strategic studies that develop policy recommendations on:

- Strategy, planning and policy for joint and combined employment of military forces;
- Regional strategic appraisals;
- The nature of land warfare;
- Matters affecting the Army's future;
- The concepts, philosophy, and theory of strategy; and
- Other issues of importance to the leadership of the Army.

Studies produced by civilian and military analysts concern topics having strategic implications for the Army, the Department of Defense, and the larger national security community.

In addition to its studies, SSI publishes special reports on topics of special or immediate interest. These include edited proceedings of conferences and topically-orientated roundtables, expanded trip reports, and quick reaction responses to senior Army leaders.

The Institute provides a valuable analytical capability within the Army to address strategic and other issues in support of Army participation in national security policy formulation.

# **INSURGENCY IN NEPAL**

**Thomas A. Marks**

**December 2003**

\*\*\*\*\*

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. This report is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

\*\*\*\*\*

Research for this monograph was made possible through a grant from the Marine Corps University Foundation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA 17013-5244. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Publications Office by calling (717) 245-4133, FAX (717) 245-3820, or by e-mail at [Rita.Rummel@carlisle.army.mil](mailto:Rita.Rummel@carlisle.army.mil)

\*\*\*\*\*

All Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) monographs are available on the SSI Homepage for electronic dissemination. SSI's Homepage address is: <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/>

\*\*\*\*\*

The Strategic Studies Institute publishes a monthly e-mail newsletter to update the national security community on the research of our analysts, recent and forthcoming publications, and upcoming conferences sponsored by the Institute. Each newsletter also provides a strategic commentary by one of our research analysts. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, please let us know by e-mail at [outreach@carlisle.army.mil](mailto:outreach@carlisle.army.mil) or by calling (717) 245-3133.

ISBN 1-58487-148-2

## FOREWORD

Insurgency—the use of protracted low intensity violence and political warfare against a government—has been one of the most pervasive and strategically significant forms of asymmetric conflict for the past century. In some instances, it actually has succeeded in overthrowing regimes or forcing occupying powers to withdraw from a state, thus redrawing the strategic landscape and altering the course of history. Few other forms of asymmetric conflict can make this claim.

Just as HIV is a particularly dangerous pathology because it integrates with other diseases, insurgency tends to meld with other forms of conflict, be they terrorism, ethnic struggles, separatism, class struggle, ideological conflict, narcotrafficking, or other forms of organized crime. This makes it both a complex and a particularly dangerous opponent, always challenging to the strategist who must deal with it.

The United States is once again challenged by insurgencies, this time connected to the Global War on Terrorism. But 21st century insurgencies are different than the Cold War era ones that generated existing doctrine and strategy, and which shaped the way that most American strategists think about insurgency. The beast has mutated and evolved. So, too, must those who confront it.

To help Army and Department of Defense leaders master these new challenges, the Strategic Studies Institute publishes a special series entitled “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century.” This study, by Dr. Thomas A. Marks, which assesses the growing insurgency in Nepal with its potential to further destabilize an already volatile region, is a path-breaking and an excellent inaugural effort in this new series.

  
DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

---

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

THOMAS A. MARKS is the author of *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London, 1996), considered the current standard on the subject of "people's war." A former U.S. Government officer who is a member of the editorial board of *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (London), he has recently served as the Oppenheimer Chair of Warfighting Strategy at the Marine Corps University (Quantico), where he taught "Insurgency and Operational Art." He is an Adjunct Professor at the U.S. Joint Special Operations University (JSOU, Hurlburt Field, FL) and a consultant for several firms specializing in political risk and personal security, to include RAND, where he is a member of the Insurgency Board. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, and in his Ph.D. work at the University of Hawaii focused on the relationship between popular upheaval and revolutionary crisis (published as *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*, Bangkok: White Lotus). In recent years, Dr. Marks has, in a variety of publications for a variety of clients, analyzed conflicts as far-flung as those in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Laos, the Philippines, and Northern Ireland. His scholarly and journalistic works number in the hundreds. His latest book is *Counter-Revolution in China: Wang Sheng and the Kuomintang* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); his latest monograph is *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002).

## SUMMARY

A decade has passed since the end of the Cold War, and insurgency remains a major factor on the world scene. Whether driven by separatism, religious alienation, or ideological desire to restructure the state, insurgents are as active now as in the earlier Cold War era of state support. Indeed, forced to rely more upon their own devices, insurgencies have posed increasingly complex problems for the globe's numerous weak states which find themselves challenged by a growing array of development and population issues.

This reality has driven continuous and extensive U.S. military involvement, thus a renewed need to focus upon the realities of internal war. Upheavals in once-obscure spots such as Nepal have come routinely to demand our attention. The study of such cases will prepare military practitioners for effective engagement -- in strategies, operational art, and tactics.

Insurgency in Nepal has existed for perhaps 5 decades but burst into the open only with the declaration of "people's war" on February 13, 1996, by the Communist Party (Maoist), or CPN(M), the most radical offshoot of the leftwing spectrum in Nepali politics. Desultory action ended when the "Maoists," as they are universally termed, unilaterally abrogated talks with the government and launched a nationwide general offensive in November 2001.

Since that time, a steadily increasing level of violence has left as many as 8,000 Nepalis dead, a majority of them in little more than a year. Terror has been integral to the Maoist campaign. US involvement has played an important role in assisting this minor but strategically-located democratic state to meet the challenges posed by ruthless radical actors.





## INSURGENCY IN NEPAL

A decade has passed since the end of the Cold War, and insurgency remains a major factor on the world scene. This has been entirely predictable, given the inevitable drive of man to improve his lot. Whether driven by separatism, religious alienation, or ideological desire to restructure the state, insurgents are as active now as in the earlier Cold War era of state support. Indeed, forced to rely more upon their own devices, insurgencies have posed increasingly complex problems for the globe's numerous weak states which find themselves, more than ever, challenged by a growing array of development and population issues.

This reality has driven continuous and extensive U.S. military involvement, thus a renewed need to focus upon the realities of internal war. Upheavals in once-obscure spots such as Nepal have come routinely to demand our attention. The study of such cases will prepare military practitioners for effective engagement—in strategies, operational art, and tactics.

Insurgency in Nepal has existed for perhaps 5 decades but burst into the open only with the declaration of "people's war" on February 13, 1996, by the Communist Party (Maoist), or CPN(M), the most radical offshoot of the leftwing spectrum in Nepali politics.<sup>1</sup> Desultory action ended when the "Maoists," as they are universally termed, unilaterally abrogated ongoing talks with the government and launched a nationwide general offensive in November 2001. Since that time, a steadily increasing level of violence has left as many as 8,000 Nepalis dead, a majority of them in little more than a year.<sup>2</sup>

Known as a premier tourist destination, the site of the mighty Himalayan Mountains, the tallest being the majestic Mt. Everest, Nepal would hardly seem a candidate for a raging communist insurgency. Indeed, if anything, its population was recognized not as rebels but for its loyal service as Gurkhas, perhaps the single most legendary infantry in the world.

The combination, though—dominant peaks and service as infantry in foreign armies—actually goes to the heart of the matter. It is not an accident that over the past nearly 2 centuries, a small, land-locked mountain kingdom has sent hundreds of thousands of its young men into combat for others. To the contrary, Nepalese have

flocked abroad not due to martial bent or any other characteristic, rather for the oldest reason known to recruiters: need.

### **Parameters of the Old Regime.**

Far from being a Shangri-la, Nepal is 24 million people competing for livelihood in a country but the size of North Carolina (which has just 8.2 million). Roughly one-third of the national territory is the Himalayas, and consequently it has a mere .7 percent of the population. The lower approximately one-third of the country, the *tarai*, scrub jungle now largely cleared, holds 32.1 percent of the populace. It could not even be settled until the 1970s when several virulent strains of malaria were conquered. This has resulted in a popular concentration, 67.2 percent, in the central one-third, or the hill country. Lest the point be lost, some 16 million people are sandwiched into "one-third of North Carolina."

According to a World Bank study made 3 decades ago (1973), "population density per square kilometer of arable land is probably as high as 1,000, a concentration similar to that found in certain Asiatic deltas, but where, in contrast, the soil is more fertile and the climate allows two to three crops a year." Conditions of livelihood—among the worst in the developing world<sup>3</sup>—were exacerbated, because an effective lack of any industrial base meant 90 percent of the population was rural, with 80 percent of the total population working directly on the land. Though 90 percent of farmers were classified as owner-operators, this impressive figure was achieved only by severe division: 50 percent of all households endeavored to engage in agriculture on plots of less than half a hectare; 7.8 percent were completely landless.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the economy has a current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of only US\$5.5 billion, an annual budget of just US\$1.1 billion. In contrast, the 2003 public school budget for Fairfax County, Virginia, outside Washington, DC, was passed at US\$1.3 billion. The official leading source of foreign exchange, tourism, in a banner year interjected the purchasing power of just 250,000 visitors annually, a limited trickle-down tap. It should come as no surprise that the United Nations lists Nepal as among the poorest countries in the world; 80 percent of the populace, surveys consistently find, must do

outside work to survive.

Limited development, however, ensures that such work is scarce. The result is a skewed distribution of resources, in which some have and others do not. The only solution readily available has been out-migration and participation in the global economy. Historically, for certain hill tribal groups, this has meant enlistment as soldiers in the British Indian Army. Such opportunities, though they declined substantially in British service since Indian independence in 1948, have continued in the forces of India, but still have no possibility of absorbing even a sizable fraction of hill tribe job-seekers, much less others.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Nepalese of all communities seeking relatively well-paid expatriate work have largely opted for service work abroad, with the largest single employer being Japan, if India itself—which has an open border with Nepal—is not considered.<sup>6</sup> Regardless, most job-seekers are unable to obtain external employment, regardless of destination, and so find themselves mired in poverty. Statistics show that at least 20 percent of the population lives in extreme, abject circumstances.

Considering only economic matters, Nepal would be a candidate for serious dislocation. Exacerbating the situation further, though, are social parameters: issues of caste, ethnicity, and language.

On the surface, Nepal is a picture of unity, the world's only official Hindu kingdom. The constitutional monarch, a living god to much of the population even in the 21st century, sits atop a society 86.5 percent Hindu and 9.0 percent Buddhist, a society in which every aspect is dominated by the caste system.

In reality, beneath this picture of unity, is division. There are 60 recognized caste and ethnic groups; only slightly more than half the population, 56.4 percent, is actually embraced by the caste system. More than one-third, 35.5 percent, are classified as ethnics, tribal groups who are outside the caste system. The four largest of these have just over one million members each: Magar, Tharu, Newar, and Tamang (Magars supply a plurality of Gurkha manpower in the British system<sup>7</sup>). A further 3.6 percent of the people are classified as belonging to religious communities (e.g., Sikhs, Muslims); 4.5 percent are "others."

Significantly, half of the caste figure is comprised of the top two castes, Brahmins and Chhetris, the historic priestly and warrior castes,

---

respectively, 16.1 percent and 12.9 percent of the total population. Ergo, 29 percent of the populace is structurally positioned, by religious mandate, to dominate. This they have done and effectively control all positions of power and influence.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, this leads to charges of unfair advantage, where disproportionate influence and possession are replicated by religious sanction.

Linguistically, there is also severe division. According to the 1991 Census, Nepal's people speak 32 languages, with only 50.3 percent claiming Nepali, the national language, as their mother tongue. Though the second language, Maithili, at 11.9 percent, is a distant second, the Census notes that some ethnic and caste groups, which have their own tongues, are not even reflected in the 32 figure. Needless to say, it is the top castes which are brought up and totally at ease with Nepali, while other groups often struggle, even as linguistic competence is a key factor in access to coveted bureaucratic employment, whether in the government or private sector.

Given such socio-economic division, it would be expected that politics would play a significant role in mediating contending demands. For the country is a functioning parliamentary democracy. Here again, there is more than meets the eye. A democracy only since 1990, Nepal suffers from the, by now, all-too-familiar problems of the genre "emerging democracy": corruption, inefficiency, and lack of focus.<sup>9</sup> Compounded by a lack of state integration, the political system has been able to foster little save a lack of legitimacy.

Nepal emerged as a country in 1774-75. As it reached its present boundaries, then sought to expand into territory claimed by British India, it found itself bested in an 1815 war with the East India Company. As a consequence, most of the *tarai* was lost, and Nepal was forced to agree to what effectively was British suzerainty.<sup>10</sup> A prime ministerial coup of sorts led to more than 100 years of hereditary Rana rule, 1846-1950, during which Nepal was closed to the outside world, save limited British representation. This ended in November 1950 when India, which desired a greater role in Nepal's affairs for defense reasons, supported a royal restoration.<sup>11</sup> The king assumed direct control in December 1960, and only in 1990-91 did democratic forces emerge triumphant.

This proved a mixed blessing. The era of Rana rule was not improved upon by the subsequent 10 years of chaotic transition and the 30 years of monarch-guided democracy, the so-called *panchayat* system. Thus, even as Nepal had all the organization and bureaucracy of a modern nation-state, in reality it remained a backwater. The writ of its administrative apparatus—five regions (plus a capital region), 75 districts (each roughly the size of a North Carolina county), and 3,913 Village Development Committees (VDC)—barely extended beyond district capitals, and most areas of the country could be reached only on foot. Development was at a primitive level. Little changed.

Heightened expectations that democracy would make a difference in the lives of the populace were dashed.<sup>12</sup> Though there were improvements, particularly in the areas of health and education, these were minor bright spots in an overall dark picture of self-absorption by the major political parties. The Nepali Congress (NPC) ruled for all but roughly a single year of the democratic era, with the legal leftist coalition, the United Marxist-Leninists (UML), the major opposition. The monarch, who might have been expected to serve a mediating and leadership role similar to that played so effectively by King Bhumipol in Thailand, was killed in June 2001 in the so-called “Royal Massacre” and was replaced by his brother, who therefore, to many, lacked legitimacy.<sup>13</sup>

### **Communist Opposition to the Old-Regime.**

Into this dynamic, the left had early interjected itself as an active player, even heading the government for slightly less than a year. Yet, as happened in Peru with the restoration of democracy in 1980 (after 12 years of attempted military “revolution from above”), the expectations and passions unleashed, which surfaced particularly vigorously within the left, saw the proliferation of ever-more radical options. The result, in the early 1990s, was the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), or CPN(M), a body that in its formative stages consciously modeled itself on *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path).

Committed to “Gang of Four” Maoism, as had emerged during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—which convulsed

---

China with its attempt to “internalize” the dialectic—it demanded a solution to Nepal’s problems by the establishment of a Maoist “people’s republic.” Politically, this necessarily meant an end to the monarchy, to be achieved through a constituent assembly which would rewrite the constitution. The party also demanded an end to “Indian imperialism.” Economically, there was to be an end to capitalist exploitation; socially, an end to caste, ethnic, religious, and linguistic exploitation. Since the system would not simply accept these demands, “people’s war” was to be used to force the issue.

People’s war, declared formally by the CPN(M) on February 13, 1996—but explicitly discussed and planned in the early 1990s, if not before—was by that time, considered in global perspective, a well-tested and efficient mechanism for seizure of state power. It may be assessed to consist of five elements:

- Mass Line: organizing an alternative society through the construction of clandestine infrastructure. Local socio-economic grievances and aspirations are to be addressed by cadres, who then connect solutions to the political mechanism of the party.

As its principal targets, the party worked in hill tribe areas, especially in the Mid-Western Region, and among *dalits*, or untouchables, the lowest caste in the Hindu system.

- United Front: making common cause with those individuals and groups who shared concerns but not necessarily goals of the party.

Issues of education, for instance, allowed mobilization of students who, though apparently not formally CPN(M) members, nevertheless acted as virtual wings of the party. Tribal fronts, ostensibly seeking more equitable treatment, were also very active.

- Military: the new alternative society, existing as it does illegally and clandestinely, necessarily relies upon armed action to maintain its security within and without. The “liberation” struggle progresses through three strategic phases, which are

quite logical. Initially, the revolutionary movement will be on the defensive, then achieve stalemate, and finally go on the offensive. During each phase, a particular form of warfare will drive the dynamic, though not necessarily quantitatively. During the strategic defensive, terror and guerrilla actions will lead. During the strategic stalemate, mobile warfare (also called maneuver warfare) will be dominant. This will see insurgent "main force" units, equivalents of government formations, take the field but not seek to hold territory. The final phase, the strategic offensive, will see such seizure of ground, the so-called "war of position."

The CPN(M) felt it was entering Phase 2 with its general offensive (November 2001). This was then solidified through the actions which led to government reverses.<sup>14</sup>

- Political Warfare: using nonviolent methods, such as participation in legal political activity or negotiations, as an adjunct to violence.

CPN(M) has emphasized that it favors a "political solution" to the issues in dispute, by which it appears to mean it is open to negotiating the terms whereby the old-order will disassemble itself. The Maoists used their earlier participation in "peace talks" as a cover for military preparations prior to launching their November 2001 general offensive. There is a possibility the recent ceasefire was used in a like-manner, but this is not clear, since the Maoists saw themselves as negotiating from a position of strength.<sup>15</sup>

- International Action: Though not a salient element during the Chinese Civil War itself, this had become ever more prominent as people's war has developed. In conflicts such as the war of liberation in Algeria by the FLN and the insurgency of the Viet Cong in the Vietnam War, international pressure upon the counterinsurgents played a decisive role.

The CPN(M) recognized early that in South Asia and within Western society it had allies: Maoist bodies yet committed,

---

whatever the outcome of the Cold War, to radical restructuring along the lines advocated by the so-called "Gang of Four," the key adherents to radical Maoism. To that end, regular coordination was effected in the West with the constituent members of the Maoist umbrella group, Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM); they provided a variety of services, such as seeking to block assistance to the Nepalese government. Closer to home, a Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) was created in July 2001 after a meeting of nine South Asian Maoist parties in West Bengal.<sup>16</sup>

In implementing this approach, the CPN(M) examined the numerous "people's war" struggles which had been carried out in the post-World War II era. The two insurgencies which exercised the most influence early on were Shining Path in Peru,<sup>17</sup> already mentioned, and the so-called "Naxalites," or Indian Maoists.<sup>18</sup> Shining Path is fairly well-known in the West. Its extraordinary level of violence had Lima on the verge of collapse by 1992, when the capture of the leadership, combined with an array of other counterinsurgency moves, all but destroyed the movement. The Naxalite phenomenon, though a virtual icon among international leftists, is less known among scholars. It began as a minor Maoist-inspired upheaval in 1967 in the small Indian district of Naxalbari, which sits up against Nepal's southeastern border, was snuffed out, but then revived in "copycat" left wing upheavals throughout India, some of which eventually required deployment of the military. Remnants remain active in at least six Indian states.<sup>19</sup>

Significantly, what both of these key influences share is that they are distinguished by their brutality. Mao himself did not shy away from violence against class enemies but held that only the most die-hard elements would have to be "struggled" to the extreme; i.e., killed. Most opponents could be neutralized and brought into support of the revolutionary endeavor through the mechanisms of the united front. Neither *Sendero* nor the Naxalites followed this approach, instead taking "elimination of class enemies" as a literal charge for action. The result was an impressive level of terror, with actual numbers being much greater in the Peruvian case. The



practical result was that the CPN(M) initially looked for inspiration to two of the more radical insurgent movements to have appeared in recent years.

There is some irony in this, since the CPN(M)'s leadership, like that of both *Sendero* and the Naxalites (not to mention the Khmer Rouge, another Maoist group which adopted extreme violence), is drawn overwhelmingly from the very "class enemies" attacked by the party's doctrine. The two key figures in the 9-man Politburo, Pushba Kamal Dahal, "Prachanda," and Baburam Bhattarai, for instance, are both Brahmins with educational backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> (The party's Military Wing head, Ram Bahadur Thapa, "Badal," is apparently ethnic Magar and hence an exception.)

That leaders of a revolutionary movement should come from the elite is consistent with global patterns, whether insurgent or terrorist, throughout the 20th and now 21st centuries. So, too, is the prominence of leadership figures with an educational background.<sup>21</sup> Followers, as might be expected, are drawn from altogether different strata, the marginalized of society, those who become the so-called "grievance guerrillas." That the CPN(M) has had little difficulty tapping such individuals stems from the abundance of socio-economic-political contradictions discussed earlier compounded by issues of gender. Women have been prominent in the recruiting profile.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to going underground and becoming illegal, prominent members of what is now the CPN(M), guided by their "progressive" ideology, focused their political efforts among just such strata, even sending a number of representatives to Parliament in the early period of transition to democracy.<sup>23</sup> The areas of this electoral strength, the same Mid-Western Regional hill districts which form the subject of so much development literature, remain the Maoist heartland.

Organizationally, there is nothing unexpected in the CPN(M)'s approach in those areas. Using the mass line in areas where they are present in strength, the united front in areas of government presence (especially urban centers), cadre have emphasized winning the allegiance of the people by tapping into local grievances and then connecting solutions with membership in the CPN(M). Logically, this has meant there oftentimes are contradictions between the subjective pronouncements of Maoist publications and objective

realities on the ground.<sup>24</sup> Where the population has hesitated, terror has been used to ensure compliance. This increasingly has been the case as the party has moved out of the areas where it previously had an electoral base. Statistical analysis of casualties shows a near-majority to be upper caste victims, an expected result in a society where those castes are dominant.<sup>25</sup>

As a mass base is mobilized, it is incorporated into a clandestine infrastructure, the alternative society of the CPN(M). This structure to date has essentially replicated that of the government, merely standing up a radical alternative. In at least six Mid-Western districts, government presence is now limited to only the district capitals, so the Maoists are effectively the ruling structure. The Politburo issues directives with the assistance of an approximately 25-member Central Committee. The precise relationship between this infrastructure and the so-called "Military Wing" is a matter of some conjecture, but the degree of independence ostensibly enjoyed by the latter from the party is undoubtedly overemphasized.<sup>26</sup> The main armed component, for instance, six guerrilla battalions, may only launch military action in response to instructions relayed through their individual Chief Commissars (one per battalion), who are Central Committee members.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the united front apparatus, while also existing as a separate entity, appears to be under firm party control.<sup>28</sup>

Leaders and followers, then, are mobilized, in the final analysis, by the same "causes," but approach the issues quite differently. Leaders, drawn overwhelmingly, even at this point in time, from elite strata, seek structural change to deal with issues. Followers, while also seeking solution, want direct, local redress.<sup>29</sup> Preliminary systemic response involved sending ill-prepared police, both from local stations and regional response units, into affected areas, where their behavior, actual and perceived,<sup>30</sup> thrust self-defense into the equation as a major theme for Maoist recruitment.<sup>31</sup>

The heartland of the early Maoist position was the area straddling either side of the border between the districts of Rolpa and Rukhum in the Mid-Western Region. There, Kham Magars responded to CPN(M) guidance and became guerrillas generally supported by the population.<sup>32</sup> Further expansion proved more difficult, and the level of popular involvement was commensurately lower. Indeed, even as

the Maoists were able to dominate the six districts in the Mid-Western regional heartland, an area as near to the epicenter of the uprising as western Rolpa, Gharti Magar territory, witnessed infrastructure so thin that mere handfuls of cadres maintained control only through their ability to call upon guerrilla manpower for enforcement of their writ.<sup>33</sup>

Though the Maoists themselves did not claim as “base areas” the human terrain they thus were able to dominate, the districts in the Mid-Western Region served that role as outlined in key “people’s war” documents authored by Mao Tse-tung. Within them, social transformation could serve as a basis for popular mobilization, with the result that the movement could project itself outward into new areas. Necessarily, a contradiction glossed over in Maoist theoretical literature emerged for the CPN(M) in terms of resources, because the base areas were among the very poorest regions in the country—due not to the issues of exploitation posited in party literature but for more mundane reasons of overpopulation, poor techniques of agriculture and animal husbandry, and limited soil and water regimes. The result was the relative absence of the sort of social engineering one would expect to find in a “liberated area”—and very limited resources available to the liberation movement.

In the absence of external input, as provided, for instance, by drugs in the cases of FARC in Colombia and *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru, CPN(M) was forced to rely upon the more traditional but limited insurgent methodology of criminal activity, especially bank-robbing, kidnapping-for-ransom, and extortion,<sup>34</sup> for generation of funds. These, though they could at times produce windfalls, were not able to meet the demands of rapid expansion.<sup>35</sup> Neither could external links make up shortfalls, since the allied movements of CCOMPOSA were actually in an inferior position logistically to their Nepalese compatriots. These stark realities left the movement with a character, in many areas, as much *jacquerie* as disciplined insurgency.

### **Dynamics of “People’s War.”**

Progress thus was steady but more a product of government lack of capacity than insurgent power. Methodology was predictable

and mirrored that of other insurgent movements following the people's war approach. While "winning the hearts and minds" was important in the base areas, terror was indispensable for expansion into contested populations. This was supplemented by guerrilla action and ultimately, with the launching of the November 2001 general offensive, the mobile warfare phase.

The basic pattern of mobile warfare may be conceptualized thus: Terror facilitates or establishes the "space" necessary for the insurgent political campaign. It eliminates societal rallying points, the synapses such as local gentry and minor government officials. Terror further generates demands for protection. Answering this demand, police forces respond. Once they predictably spread out, they are attacked in guerrilla actions, with small patrols and stations overwhelmed. Unable to defend themselves, the police invariably consolidate forces, thus exposing still larger swaths of the population to insurgent domination. Behind the scenes, certain guerrilla units (i.e., a proportion of guerrilla combatant strength) are "regularized," to use Mao's term, turned into mobile warfare units—"main force" guerrilla units. They are "conventional" but only in the sense of established tables of organization and equipment (TOE) and specialization. When the government inevitably deploys its military to reclaim "lost" areas, these units (normally the army) find themselves, first, harassed by guerrilla action, which demands small unit saturation patrolling, then, defeated in detail by the mobile warfare units (which fight using "guerrilla tactics").<sup>36</sup>

Doctrinally, political cadre should enter an area and gradually mobilize clandestine infrastructure which produces violent action. Some movements, such as the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and *Sendero Luminoso* itself prior to its 1980 declaration of people's war, have essentially followed this approach. More common, though, as illustrated by the Naxalites in India and FARC in Colombia, is to lead with violence, "capturing" a target population and then reorganizing it according to ideological dictate. This is the approach CPN(M) has relied upon since 1996.

In a typical action, in Muchook, a small village 4 hours walk from the district capital of Gorkha (the capital is also Gorkha), a Congress Party representative and Maoist opponent, a "big landlord" (two hectares), was awakened at 2230 by a knock on his door. Confronted

by seven Maoists, armed principally with agricultural implements, he was dragged from his home and told he was to be made "to suffer the way you made the people suffer." His legs and feet were then systematically broken with hammers. Carried to a hospital in Kathmandu, he survived, but his absence deprived the village of a natural rallying point, for there existed no government presence in Muchook, no police station, for example. Police who did venture to the area found nothing, but they could not stay, and so the Maoists effectively took control of the village and its surrounding area, one of Nepal's 3,913 basic building blocks, or VDC.

This process was repeated time and again. Complementary moves were carried out to neutralize completely the state. District and VDC offices, for example, were systematically razed, their records and equipment destroyed. In Gorkha, the single month-and-a-half period prior to May 2002 saw 34 of the district's 66 VDC offices completely eliminated. The 60-odd police stations, with their approximately 500 men spread out over the size of a U.S. county (3,610 sq-km), with more than a quarter of a million people to cover and no real means to do so save on foot (the only paved road in the district connected Gorkha town to Kathmandu), were helpless.<sup>37</sup> Nationwide, then, by the beginning of 2003, more than 1,400 VDCs no longer existed; and virtually all no longer functioned, their personnel, elected locally, having almost universally fled.<sup>38</sup> The influence of terror was illustrated by the reality that fewer than 30 VDC Chairmen had actually been assassinated (again, of a theoretical 3,913 total).<sup>39</sup>

All other elements of the state likewise found themselves attacked. Roads were cut; bridges, dams and hydropower facilities, aqueducts, telephone towers and electric lines, and airport control towers were systematically destroyed. By the same early-2003 date noted above, more than 440 post offices, most but rudimentary facilities, had been gutted.<sup>40</sup>

Such action was the essence of the approach of *Sendero Luminoso* (which Nepalese Maoist documents claimed to be copying consciously) and the Khmer Rouge.<sup>41</sup> To all appearances, the goal was to sever links with the existing system, isolate the population into a self-contained entity, and return society to the proverbial revolutionary "Year One," when the remaking of the new world would begin. The guide for this transformation was to be the

thoughts and dictums of the leader, “Prachanda Path,” a deliberate echoing of *Sendero Luminoso*’s “Gonzalo Path” (“President Gonzalo” was party leader Abimael Guzman Reynoso).

Though the essence of the campaign was rural-based, as would be expected from the “people’s war” approach (as it had evolved, particularly through the Vietnam War experience), urban action was not eschewed. Just as *Sendero* eventually extended its campaign into urban space, so did the CPN(M). Such areas, in any case, were limited in Nepal, so the main targets were the three most important cities and their surrounding productive lands: Kathmandu, the capital; Pokhara, to the west, on the doorstep of the Mid-Western Region; and Nepalgunj in the *tarai*. There, united front activity of the CPN(M)’s United Revolutionary People’s Council (URPC) was most important, supplemented by a terror campaign of bombings and assassinations initiated in August 2002.<sup>42</sup> The most prominent victim was Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mohan Shrestha, commanding officer of the police field force (Armed Police Force or APF), killed in January 2003.

Even as terror forced society in upon itself, the principal target of guerrilla action was the 46,500-man police force, the first line of armed defense—for Nepal possessed no local forces of any kind.<sup>43</sup> An essentially unarmed “watcher” force, two-thirds of whom carried nothing heavier than a patrol stick, the police were quite unprepared for the demands of counterinsurgency. Emergency response units, who in any case were armed with the 1941 version of the .303 Lee Enfield (a bolt action rifle), were likewise found lacking. Patrols sent to the scenes of incidents were ambushed; numerous small police stations were overrun, attacked in the dead of night in assaults initiated with homemade explosives, then overwhelmed by human wave assaults. Efforts to stand up a more properly armed and equipped APF of 15,000 men<sup>44</sup> made slow progress under the pressure of operational demands. By January 2003, the Civil Police had suffered 985 dead, the APF, 108 dead.<sup>45</sup>

Predictably, the only possible police response was to abandon outlying stations and consolidate in defensible mass. In the hills, where terrain, lack of communication, and difficulty of movement favored the guerrillas, this process was inexorable across the entire breadth of the country. Rolpa, in the insurgent heartland, was

typical.<sup>46</sup> In 1996, there were 33 stations in the district, with the largest but 75 men, most less than 20.<sup>47</sup> When the post at Ghartigaun in western Rolpa was attacked in 1999, for example, it had a complement of 19. Fifteen were killed, the others wounded; the station was totally destroyed and not regarrisoned. In 1998, two such stations were abandoned; in 1999, a further 16; in 2000, six more; in 2001, another four; and in 2002, three—leaving a total of just two for the entire population of nearly 211,000.<sup>48</sup>

Such was the lack of national integration that, once the police presence was eliminated, the insurgents became the state. All that remained to serve as a reminder of far-off Kathmandu were the minor functionaries, who could not flee lest they lose their meager salaries: the likes of teachers, postmen, and VDC personnel. Heads of VDCs, as mentioned previously, almost universally fled;<sup>49</sup> but school staffs and postmen generally stayed. Had the approach of *Sendero*, the Naxalites, or the Khmer Rouge remained the dominant ethos of the Maoists, not only would one expect such personnel to be eliminated but a new order instituted. Allowing for local exceptions, this was not the case. Indeed, in most areas, once the initial spasm of destruction had been completed, it ended—with comparatively lower levels of destruction in those areas where the Maoists held sway and made use of facilities, such as VDC offices. Land was not systematically seized or redistributed, and even schools were not directed to change the normal, centrally determined curriculum (though private schools were generally closed). Maoist combatants carried out civic action projects of sorts (such as improving trails and constructing bridges) even as government development personnel—charged with doing the same tasks—were refused entry. Only in those core areas of longstanding insurgent presence did anything “new” surface, though various people’s governments and projects, in reality, were but efforts to make earlier forms more equitable and responsive.

The critical component at the local level, of course, was the cadres. These, too, were remarkably uneven in quality and presence. It would be expected that the level of ideological knowledge would be low among movement “followers,” but this generally has proved the case for the cadres, as well. Participation in the movement resulted from a variety of local and personal factors,<sup>50</sup> and cadres generally

did their best to reproduce the procedures and symbology of the movement; but outside the core areas, they held sway only through terror, through their ability to call upon guerrilla formations to act as enforcers.<sup>51</sup>

This reality revealed a peculiarity noticed by virtually all observers: the dependence of the Maoist campaign upon tribal manpower, especially Magars. That guerrilla formations were dominated numerically by Magars stemmed from the ethnic composition of the core areas in which the Maoists had long worked, such as the Rukhum-Rolpa border corridor. That entire tribal communities would become involved in the insurgency was predictable once government miscues allowed the CPN(M) to tap the self-defense dynamic. A staple of Maoist agitprop in such areas remains skits featuring blue-clad "policemen" burning villages and brutalizing the villagers, only to be routed by them under the leadership of the party. That tribal links were being exploited was further illustrated by Magar dominance of guerrilla formations as far away from the core Mid-Western areas as Dolakha District, the "Rolpa of the East,"<sup>52</sup> where Magars were less than 2 percent of the population (as per census).<sup>53</sup>

If this dynamic fingered the CPN(M), in a sense, as a tribal revolt, a different process was at work in more mixed areas. In these, cadres were the movement, and they, as indicated, were a product of local realities and thus of mixed ethnic and class composition. Though they did participate directly in terror actions, especially in villages targeted for movement expansion, within their own areas of responsibility, they were more likely to call upon outsiders, the guerrillas.<sup>54</sup>

These guerrillas, who initially were in small units, eventually (certainly by early 2003) were overwhelmingly assigned to six main force units, battalion facsimiles of 400-600 men each. Single battalions were found in the Eastern and Central Zones (as per the Maoist framework), four battalions in the Western Zone.<sup>55</sup> Their weaponry was similar to that possessed by the Nepalese government, a mix of the old and the new. The latter were primarily captured pieces and those bought on the black market using looted funds.<sup>56</sup> For training, ex-servicemen were both coerced and hired.

Even were terror not the most salient issue in the minds of



villagers, contact between them and the guerrillas would be a recurring factor in life, since the combatants depend upon the villagers for the necessities of life. All movement, for instance, must occur through the preparation of caches of necessities, ranging from food and water to firewood, and such activity occurs through orders issued to villagers by the cadres at the behest of the guerrilla chain-of-command. Similarly, mandatory attendance by villagers at political rallies is enforced by the combatants, with the cadres issuing the orders and fingering those who resist or malingering.

The end product is a high level of popular fear but an inability to do anything save reach accommodation—unless flight is adopted as a course of action. At the time of the ceasefire, a growing number of villagers appeared to be opting for this choice.<sup>57</sup>

### **Systemic Response to the Maoist Challenge.**

Only with the November 2001 general offensive by the Maoists did Nepal take the necessary step of reinforcing the overwhelmed police force by committing the 54,000 troops of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA)<sup>58</sup> and passing anti-terrorism legislation. Spread throughout areas of the country which could be reached by road, quartered in battalion but more often company cantonments, the RNA was a largely ceremonial force better known for its contribution to UN peacekeeping missions than for martial prowess. Indeed, even companies did not deploy as such. The result was a number of serious reverses as the RNA went through the painful transformation required for dealing with guerrilla warfare. In several instances, company-equivalents were overrun. By January 2003, the RNA had suffered 244 dead and 345 wounded.<sup>59</sup>

Faced with the Maoist campaign, the Nepalese state reeled. Though the number of dead was not as severe as that of many other insurgencies—the highest total figures for the entire period, February 13, 1996, to the present, are put at some 8,000<sup>60</sup>—they were concentrated in the year-plus which followed November 2001. A majority of all war dead, therefore, came in the space of just over a year, a powerful shock to Nepal.<sup>61</sup>

Response was hampered by the political shortcomings already

---

detailed. Not only did governments change with startling rapidity, on average one per year, but governance was only possible due to the formation of various intra- and even inter-party coalitions. Self-interest was the order of the day, illustrated by rampant corruption, and administrative drift meant that even substantial foreign development assistance was not incorporated in a systematic manner. The appearance of an insurgency, therefore, was seen as but one more minor factor among many and parceled out to the security forces for action, which in pre-November 2001 meant to the police.

Under some enlightened commanders, local police operations could have passed for those that had proved successful for the British in Malaya. Others, though, were more repression than development in thrust. One advantage for the state was that numerous individuals, both civilians and security force, had served abroad with the United Nations in peacekeeping situations.<sup>62</sup> Thus they were well-versed in the “hearts and minds” approach to internal pacification as opposed to pure repression. It was in a sense predictable, then, that approximately a year before the Maoist general offensive, the RNA, though still in its barracks as concerned stability operations, was nevertheless deployed in limited fashion in support of a government Integrated Security and Development Program (ISDP).

The RNA, it was intended, would serve as the security shield for bringing government presence to underdeveloped areas, which would then see an interjection of activity designed to improve conditions and promote livelihood. As matters worked out, the RNA was the only element of the government which actually fulfilled its role. Though six districts were designated, with Gorkha as the pilot project, and RNA battalions deployed in area domination patrols, the civilian input was limited to selection of the projects by local government bodies. The result was that the RNA itself used its limited assets to build roads, dig wells, and provide rudimentary medical attention to villagers. Yet none of this was done on a scale which made the slightest difference in the actual situation on the ground.<sup>63</sup>

With the November 2001 offensive, the ISDP was suspended, and the RNA deployed to engage in area domination. The highest formation for command and control was the brigade, but this gradually gave way to divisions and a planned corps, both of

these more area commands than deployable military entities. Solid individual training could not be channeled into results-oriented operations due to shortfalls of arms and equipment, as well as severe shortcomings in leadership and technical skills.

A critical weakness was intelligence, the linchpin of any counterinsurgency effort. Nepal's various sources for information gathering and processing—the police, APF, RNA, and National Investigation Department (NID)—were quite unprepared for the demands of internal war and generally deficient in both information gathering and intelligence production/dissemination.<sup>64</sup> Exacerbating the situation, these bodies functioned as separate entities with little coordination or data sharing. Only at the very highest levels of the bureaucracy was raw input brought together for analysis, but this, too, was provided for in an ad hoc and undermanned fashion.<sup>65</sup>

Still, dramatic strides were made in standing up the command and control architecture necessary for counterinsurgency. With the Prime Minister in the lead role, the National Security Council was charged with actually prosecuting the campaign. Because the council itself consisted of top government leaders, its Executive Secretariat undertook planning and coordination tasks. At various levels, but especially in the districts, coordinating committees—comprised of the local police, RNA, civil, and intelligence representatives—met to determine policy and implementation. A unified command, with the RNA having authority over all elements of the armed response, eventually came into existence, giving fiber to the ad hoc but functioning coordination cells that had been formed at RNA headquarters. APF platoons were deployed as if they were “light” RNA units, and the police were given primacy in the defense of most urban areas.<sup>66</sup>

But difficulties occurred in overcoming the substantial baggage of past political inadequacies. The police, for instance, were not trusted by the RNA, being seen as corrupt, inefficient, and bullyboys for the ruling party, which normally had been the Nepali Congress. The new APF, in turn, had received a good portion of its initial manpower draft from various Nepali Congress youth groups and so likewise was not trusted by either the Civil Police—who did have a good many within the officer corps who were well-trained and had substantial experience—or the RNA. For its part, the RNA was

---

viewed as loyal first and foremost to the palace and as a possible threat to fledgling democracy. A highly centralized decisionmaking machinery meant that even the best of motives could often not overcome bureaucratic inertia or implement decisions when they were forthcoming.

Foreign support hence became crucial in addressing these flaws. Britain, as might be expected from its long and deep involvement in Nepal, played an important role in training of all sorts. India, concerned lest it see another security headache develop on a crucial border (Nepal was a buffer between New Delhi and Beijing), responded initially with training and material support, eventually moving vigorously to suppress substantial Maoist activity within India's own borders. Ironically, China, having moved in its foreign policy beyond supporting "Maoist insurgents," also provided equipment. Finally, the United States, which long had been a major development actor through its U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), moved vigorously in all areas, from supplying arms and equipment to training. An emergency appropriation brought the combined military aid (Foreign Military Financing) for Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003 (FY02/FY03) to US\$17 million. Assessment teams from all three of the countries just named (absent China) were supplemented by personnel for actual training, to include U.S. Special Forces.

Where no amount of foreign input could compensate, though, was in overcoming the shortcomings of a traditional system, which organizationally manifested themselves in extreme deference to authority and a consequent lack of initiative. Such, combined with the intelligence problems cited above, resulted in a failure to tackle the struggle operationally and tactically—even as general strategic grasp of overall parameters could be judged reasonably accurate. While it was understood with considerable clarity how socio-economic-political shortcomings had produced the insurgency, it was not grasped how to respond.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, a comparatively weak insurgent movement, which drew its combatant strength from minimally armed tribal revolt and could expand beyond core regions only through terror orchestrated by voluntarist action, was allowed to go unchecked for want of application of any systematic counter.

Further, even as this uncoordinated, haphazard, armed response moved forward, political realities made a bad situation worse. Virtually the entire post-November 2001 period saw the government in a state of crisis, with the Nepali Congress splitting into two rival factions, and the UML reportedly refusing to accept the reigns of government. Finally, in October 2002, circumstances became so bad that the King, using extraordinary powers granted to him by the Constitution—but highly controversial nevertheless—disbanded Parliament and appointed a government made up predominantly of members from minority political parties.<sup>68</sup> As the King's own legitimacy was not secure, this made the government's even less so, and the ousted parties wasted no time in endeavoring to test through mass action the staying power of the new administration. So tainted were the political parties by their own corruption and ineptness, though, that they were unable to rally a viable challenge.

The Maoists chose this moment to offer, in January 2003, a ceasefire and renewed negotiations. The reason already had been provided by Bhatarra in December 2002: "The situation is now peaking towards a climax after the fratricidal and regicidal 'king,' Gyanendra, and his notorious son, Paras, have staged a retrogressive coup d'etat against the supine parliamentary democracy on October 4 and restored autocratic monarchy in the country."<sup>69</sup> Such vitriol notwithstanding, the country eagerly embraced the proffered respite.<sup>70</sup>

Earlier negotiations, as detailed above, had been unilaterally terminated by the CPN(M) in November 2001 in order to go over to the offensive. Yet links had never been broken. The UML, in particular, because its stated ideology continued to incorporate the notion of "revolution," had kept channels of communication open, as had any number of other actors. Human rights groups, for instance, endeavored to act as mediators. Eventually, these channels were used by the palace and its appointed government to renew discussions. Just how these would fare remained anyone's guess, because neither side showed any sign of altering its basic positions. These, to be clear, were irreconcilable on such basics as the nature of the state and the position of the monarchy. Both sides continued to train, re-equip, and acquire armaments.

In this situation, the Maoist position was of most moment. From the previous ceasefire, captured documents and pictures, to include

video footage, together with interrogations of prisoners, showed cadres telling the mass base that negotiations were but a tactical gambit, that the cause of the revolution would never be betrayed or given up until a “people’s republic” was established. The real question was whether the new talks were seen by the party as but a pause for regrouping or a more serious effort to gain by nonviolent means that which thus far it had been unable to gain through violence; a standard political warfare technique, to be sure, but one that did not produce the level of societal dislocation attending the Maoists’ effort to become, to borrow a phrase, “the New Sendero.”

Significantly, the latter course seemed likely, with the CPN(M)—in its own calculations—moving from a position of strength into fractured Nepali politics. Analysis, however, pointed to two possible interpretations of Maoist designs.

- “The Leninist Scenario”: The CPN(M), given the circumstances, felt it could not lose and would be able to defeat the enemy in detail, much as Lenin did in the chaos between the ouster of the Czar and the final Bolshevik coup.<sup>71</sup> Directly and through its front organizations, as in 2001, it aggressively used political space, within which it could operate freely, to further divide its foes. In closed-door meetings, it made common cause with both the political parties and the monarchy (through the sitting government), the end-game being to use one against the other, then to out-manuever the survivor in the organizational contest to follow. Crucial in this strategy was the “constituent assembly,” through which the monarchy was to be neutralized, in particular separated from its armed base, the RNA—in the name of establishing a “republic.” Integration of the CPN(M) combatants, as was demanded, would further ensure the inability of the RNA to respond to provocation. In such an environment, co-optation would serve in place of armed confrontation. Indeed, the CNP(M)’s “75 Points”<sup>72</sup> were structured as such a multitude precisely so that no one or minor grouping was objectionable. It was the totality of the platform, to be achieved by persistently emphasizing that the smaller, “moderate”<sup>73</sup> compromises provided the only route to a “lasting peace,” that was intended to produce a totally transformed whole.

- “The PIRA Scenario”: The CPN(M) had not changed its basic positions but, like the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in Northern Ireland, saw the moment as ripe for pushing ahead with nonviolent means even as violence was held in reserve.<sup>74</sup> This formulation was theoretically of particular interest, because it held that a substate actor held the same rights as the state. In particular, the state was no longer granted a monopoly of legitimate force. To the contrary, having lost this status by illegitimate action, the state, it was claimed, had to negotiate with the substate actor—which had access to its own purportedly legitimate force. Hence the Maoists claimed to have emerged, through the use of violence, as an equal to the Nepalese state. The state controlled the urban areas, argued the CPN(M), the substate actor controlled the rural areas. The clash between the thesis and antithesis, hitherto a violent affair, had given rise to the demand for the realization of a new synthesis through nonviolent negotiation. Violence had been necessary to arrive at the point of “political solution,” but violence could be superseded by political warfare. The destruction wreaked principally in the hinterland, therefore, though having various tactical and operational goals, such as area domination, strategically was intended as political communication, irrefutable evidence for the old-order that the CPN(M) was a force that could not be ignored.<sup>75</sup> No doubt of marginal interest to those affected, such a mindset would not be that of *Sendero Luminoso* or the Khmer Rouge but of PIRA: not the destruction of the old-regime in all its manifestations but destruction utilized as a weapon—to inflict pain to achieve the “political solution.”

Neither of these two interpretations would have precluded inclusion by the Maoists of more immediate concerns, though Bhattarai, as the head of the Maoist negotiations team, emphasized that the CPN(M)’s “75 Points” was a document of strategic goals rather than tactical demands. He claimed for the Party a willingness to accept intermediate steps (e.g., a “bourgeois republic” with a constitutional monarchy), a determination to move beyond an early attraction for the approach of *Sendero Luminoso* or the Naxalites in order to arrive at a unique, situationally-appropriate “Nepalese

Maoism.”<sup>76</sup> Specifics of application for the building of a new Nepal were to be found in an expansion of Bhattarai’s Ph.D. dissertation released in May 2003.<sup>77</sup>

Even if this formulation were accepted at face value, there were grounds for pessimism. Maoist excessive rhetoric, especially attacks upon the RNA, and a bargaining emphasis upon broad, often utopian, declarations at the expense of specifics, soon led to a situation where the two sides talked past each other. Undoubtedly, the RNA saw little but a cynical effort to weaken it. In the field, Maoist cadres and combatants had been briefed that the major goal of the new round of talks was the “national army.”<sup>78</sup> Simultaneously, the Maoist representatives in Kathmandu focused upon ending international assistance to the government (which, as indicated above, has been crucial in enhancing the capabilities of the security forces), all the while demanding an RNA “return to barracks.” Under no such restrictions themselves, Maoist forces continued to move and train, funded by undiminished criminal activity.

Further, unsure of their position vis-à-vis Nepal’s international supporters in the era of the U.S.-led “War on Terrorism” (WOT), the Maoists stridently attacked them, in particular the United States. This furthered the impression of Machiavellian maneuvering, though it would seem more correct to find the inspiration for such CPN(M) verbiage in the party’s parochial origins and operational environment. Put simply, the Maoists had a painfully limited understanding of the global forces and processes presently in play.<sup>79</sup> This led to a degree of paranoia and mistaken bargaining positions.

It should be further noted here that the representatives of the CPN(M) present in Kathmandu were among the most worldly and well-educated in the Party. This led to questions as to both the scope of their authority and the degree to which their positions accurately reflect those of the entire leadership. Though CPN(M) decisionmaking is apparently a collective enterprise, Prachanda dominates through majority support in the Politburo. His views—especially concerning the extent to which compromise may be exercised in negotiations—were not known—despite the claim by Bhattarai that he and his peers were but a reflection of the party



will.

The difficulty of the situation was compounded by the movement, in May 2003, of the estranged political parties into a phase of active resistance against the state—which led to the resignation of the first “caretaker” government in June and its replacement by a follow-on administration. Though the parties continued to voice support for a favorable outcome in the government/CPN(M) negotiations, they committed their own efforts completely to confrontation with the palace and its appointed government. This action, the Maoists joined but haltingly, instead focusing upon using their fronts to increase dramatically their influence within what hitherto had been the government’s rear area.

In such an environment, the only real surprise came when the Maoists, on August 27, 2003, abruptly terminated the ceasefire and resorted again to a variety of armed actions, to include targeted assassinations against important government personnel in Kathmandu. The surprise came from the obvious: government disorientation and lack of focus seemed to be providing the CPN(M) with ample leeway to make progress, through “political” means, progress that would surely be more difficult in a state of armed conflict. Indeed, faced with renewed Maoist assassination efforts, the government promptly restored legal prohibitions and asked international organizations for assistance in apprehending leadership figures. Thus “people’s war” is again in full swing.

### **Recommendations.**

As the situation has lurched from crisis to crisis, the concern of external powers has grown commensurately, particularly that of the United States. For the dangers of peripheral areas that come to be dominated by hostile, radical actors have been driven home to Washington by cases as diverse as Afghanistan, northwest Pakistan, Yemen, Georgia, Jammu and Kashmir, Colombia, and the southern Philippines. The latter two have been particular examples of the role tardy or misdirected U.S. action can play in allowing a local situation to grow into a security threat to us. Lest Nepal prove similar, it is imperative that Washington proceed with an adroit mixture of reasoned advice and adequate material support and training. Given

---

the nature of the foe, the existing U.S. military role seems destined to increase in prominence.

To improve its position, Kathmandu should logically look to the following (with U.S. input as appropriate):

- National mobilization is necessary, as appropriate for grappling with the most serious crisis to confront Nepal since its transition to democracy in 1990-91. No matter how serious that earlier upheaval, it pales in scope and casualties to what presently is occurring. Yet the counterinsurgency remains essentially a matter delegated to the security forces. There are, for instance, no local forces of any sort. Neither, at the other end of the spectrum, has there been a clear articulation of "why we fight."
- A key component in this national response must be a strategic plan, with operational components delimited and responsibilities assigned. This will necessarily involve all elements of national power and drive a multifaceted, coordinated response to the insurgency. Jointness is critical, but thus far even the police have been marginalized, much less civilian components of the state. The heart of the plan must be domination of human terrain rather than focus upon insurgent combatants. Local security remains the key to restoration of normalcy.
- Socio-economic-political reform must assume pride of place in any such plan. Though the operational driving force behind insurgent expansion is provided by terror, it is the strategic environment of the failed state that is Nepal which has thrown up the historic moment the Maoists seek to exploit. Democracy has been corrupt and ineffective, the political class distracted and self-absorbed. Consequences in the economic and social spheres have consequently been exacerbated. Leadership must set in place solutions that can provide the inspiration for mobilization.
- Intelligence must continue to improve, with greater emphasis placed upon coordination and timely dissemination. Basic analytical techniques appropriate to internal war in a low-tech environment will provide a foundation upon which other capabilities can be built. Nature of the battle space and of the

insurgents, though, dictates that human intelligence (HUMINT) must be the dominant activity.

- Information warfare (IW) must be moved from its current unfocused, weak state to the status of force-multiplier. Generally favorable disposition towards the system by the populace demands this, even as the insurgents provide the human material for their own demise by continuing to rely upon terror as the lynchpin of their campaign. The only meaningful IW activity is coming from the RNA. This must be elevated to a government activity.
- Special Operations capabilities must be made more robust and integrated into the overall approach. Present arrangements are ad hoc. They are decentralized due to the lack of mobility assets but have not been utilized in the most appropriate manner. Deep penetration reconnaissance, running of pseudo-gangs, and direct action have all been successful but uncoordinated and reactive.
- Leadership and other skills at all levels must be sharpened as per the demands of internal war. Doctrine, training particulars, and basics (to include Rules of Engagement) have not been made focused or systematic as demanded by the challenge at hand. Small unit leadership has revolved around hazing rather than inspiration. Officers frequently are deficient in the rudiments of tradecraft, much less the mechanics of unit maneuver. Even rapid overland movement remains a challenge when solutions are readily available. Nepalis must look to low-tech, indigenous solutions and not be seduced by the lure of high-tech, expensive measures and systems—which, in any case, are unavailable.

## ENDNOTES

1. For a sympathetic treatment of historical context, see Arjun Karki and David Seddon, "The People's War in Historical Context," in Karki and Seddon, eds., *The People's War in Nepal: Left Perspectives*, Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2003, pp. 3-48.

2. The closest thing to an "official" figure for the conflict is 7,362 dead as of the end of 2002, Informal Sector Research & Study Centre (INSEC). See Attachment 1.

---

An updated count through May 12, 2003, raises this slightly to 7,424. Less formal estimates regularly place the total in the 8,000 range. The latest publication, with complete statistics for 2002, is *Nepal: Human Rights Yearbook 2003*, Kathmandu: INSEC, 2003. Latest data puts the death toll for the single month following August 27, 2003 at astonishing 1,080.

3. In 1971, when Nepal's population was but 12 million, average life expectancy was 37 years, and the infant mortality rate (per 100,000 births) was a staggering 172. Adult literacy was 13 percent. By 1998, despite substantial improvement, a Nepali could still expect to live but 58 years; the infant mortality rate was 72; and adult literacy was 38 percent. *Civics in Nepal*, grade 12 textbook, Contemporary Society Course, Kathmandu: Creative Press, 2001. Such trends became still more pressing as a rapidly growing population produced an age distribution whereby, as per 2001 census estimates, 50 percent of the population was 19 years or younger.

4. For discussion of structural issues engendered by traditional patterns of landholding, cf. Mahesh C. Regmi, *Landownership in Nepal*, Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 1999 (1st Indian ed.), and Shanker Thapa, *Historical Study of Agrarian Relations in Nepal, 1846-1951*, Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2000.

5. The United Kingdom establishment has been run down to just two infantry battalions and limited support units, with another battalion-equivalent (3 rifle companies) assigned to round-out under-strength British infantry battalions. Brunei, where one of the two UK battalions is based on a rotational basis, has two Gurkha battalions of its own, though they apparently have declined in strength after agitation concerning pay and allowances. Manpower for these two battalions comes from prior-service British Gurkhas who are recruited upon separation from UK service. Singapore Police have a Gurkha battalion which is recruited as part of the normal British scheme. India apparently has at least 42 battalions of Gurkha infantry and some 10-12 battalions of other formations, such as Assam Rifles, which, though not nominally "Gurkha," are in fact manned by them. At a May 11, 2003, presentation in Kathmandu, Major (Ret) Deepak Gurung presented figures which placed 35,000 Nepalese in the Indian Army, with over 115,000 receiving pensions, and 3,500 men in the British establishment, with 26,000 receiving pensions. If the number of "other formations" is included, it would appear that the number of Nepali citizens serving in the Indian armed and paramilitary forces is possibly as high as 50,000. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

6. As of the end of 2001, there were officially 1,870,000 Nepalis working abroad, though the numbers cannot be considered accurate, as there is no way to measure returnees. Perhaps as many as 500,000-700,000 were thought to be in Japan. More purportedly precise figures stated that Saudi Arabia had 71,895 working there, with another 44,226 in Qatar. More than 53,000 Nepalis apparently sought employment in Malaysia the same year. Statistics for Nepalese working in India

are unreliable, but one data set puts the figure at 587,243 in 1991, with a further 418,982 Nepalese born in India. See Harka Gurung, *Nepal: Social Demography and Expressions*, Kathmandu: New Era, 2001, pp. 16-18. For a comprehensive look at a particular community, see A. C. Sinha and T. B. Subba, *The Nepalis in Northeast India*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 2003. Independent estimates figure at least US\$1 billion is remitted to Nepal from overseas annually. *Field Notes*, November 2002.

7. Useful is Gary Shepherd, *Life Among the Magars*, Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press, 1982. Particularly good for the situation in the Nepali hills generally is J. P. Cross, *The Call of Nepal*, Series II/Vol 17 of *Bibliotecta Himalayica*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998 (1996 original); on the Gurkhas themselves, see Cross, *In Gurkha Company*, London: Arms and Armour, 1986. For details of recruiting, a variety of sources are useful; see particularly two works by Lionel Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen: "Gurkhas" in the Western Imagination*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995; and *Land and Social Change in East Nepal*, 2d ed., Kathmandu: Himal Books, 2000; as well as Tony Gould, *Imperial Warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas*, London: Granta Books, 1999. For insight into the "Victorian Mentality," see a reprint of a 19th century work, Ministry of Defence, *Nepal and the Gurkhas*, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1965. For the present Indian forces, the best readily available work is Rajesh Kadian, *India and its Army*, New Delhi: Vision Books, 1990. For historical recruiting patterns of Nepalese, see Purushottam Banskota, *The Gurkha Connection: A History of the Gurkha Recruitment in the British Army*, New Delhi: Nirala, 1994; and Kamal Raj Singh Rathaur, *The Gurkhas: A History of the Recruitment in the British Indian Army*, New Delhi: Nirala, 1987.

8. British presentation to June 2002 Donors Meeting in United Kingdom: "In 2000 upper castes accounted for 35 percent of the population, but 95 percent of the civil service, 98 percent of army officers, 78 percent of political leaders, including—ironically—the Maoists." Less dominant figures may be found in the literature, but even the most favorable see the two upper castes represented in all major areas in proportion at least double to their societal fraction. Cf. the extensive data presented in Harka Gurung, especially the tables in the appendices.

9. See, e.g., Martin Hoftun, William Raeper, and John Whelpton, *People, Politics, and Ideology: Democracy and Social Change in Nepal*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1999; and Dhruva Kumar, ed., *Domestic Conflict and Crisis of Governability in Nepal*, Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University, 2000. In the latter, Ch. 6, Pancha N. Maharjan, pp. 163-196, deals specifically with the Maoist challenge and contains a wealth of data.

10. A lasting result was the treaty, signed with the "King of Goorkha," that allowed Britain to recruit from certain Nepalese hill tribes for armed service; thus the Gurkhas.

---

11. The Indian political left played an important role in this process. Useful for what it has to offer concerning later trends discussed in this monograph is Santwana Tewari Chaube, *Democratic Movement in Nepal and the Indian Left*, Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 2001. For a more general discussion of the crucial role India played ideologically, see D. P. Adhikari, *The History of Nepalese Nationalism*, Kathmandu: Jeewan Printing Support Press (personal imprint), 1988.

12. Useful for a discussion of this issue at the local level is Ganga Bahadur, ed., *Promoting Participatory Democracy in Nepal: An Assessment of Local Self-Governance*, Kathmandu: Political Science Association of Nepal, 1998.

13. The entire royal family was shot and killed by the elder son, angered at his inability to secure parental consent to marry the woman of his choice. He subsequently turned his weapon upon himself but did not die immediately, presenting the country with the bizarre situation where a murderer was, prior to his death, the crowned king, which occurred even as he was in the intensive care unit. For further details, see, e.g., Jonathan Gregson, *Massacre at the Palace: The Doomed Royal Dynasty of Nepal*, New York: Hyperion, 2002.

14. As stated by Baburam Bhattarai, the CPN(M)'s chief ideologue and the head of the International Department of the party: "The revolutionary people's movement (which is popularly known as People's War) undergoing for the past 7 years has now created a parallel people's power, army, economy, and culture in large parts of the country, except the cities, and a situation of strategic stalemate has developed in the overall sense." See interview conducted via the internet by Chitra Tiwari with Bhattarai, "Maoists Seek a Democratic Nepal," *The Washington Times*, December 14, 2002.

15. Bhattarai in *ibid.*: "We have always remained amenable to a negotiated settlement of the problem, but it is the feudal autocratic monarchy that has sabotaged all our earlier attempts. The 'ice' will be hard to break unless the monarchy is made to realize that its days are now numbered and it has to make a graceful exit from the stage of history."

16. From India: Communist Party of India/Marxist-Leninist, People's War (or CPI/M-L, PW), based in Andhra Pradesh and known generally as "People's War Group" (or PWG); Maoist Communist Centre (or MCC), based in Bihar, the large Indian state on Nepal's southern border; the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist); and the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India, (Marxist-Leninist). From Bangladesh: Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (M-L); Purbo Bangla Sarbahara Party (CC); and Purbo Bangla Sarbahara Party (MPK). From Sri Lanka: the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist). The ninth attendee, of course, was the CPN(M) itself. More recently, a Bhutanese Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) has emerged and called for "people's war" to overthrow the reigning monarchy. This organization is not yet a CCOMPOSA member but can

be expected to seek such status. *Field Notes*, May 2003. It remains unclear whether this hitherto unknown party is an ethnic Bhutanese phenomenon or an outgrowth of CPN(M) efforts to penetrate the ethnic Nepalese community of the country. The latter has been in a state of turmoil since the late 1980s as a result of official Bhutanese efforts to promote nationalism through a variety of socio-economic-political measures. Cf. Michael Hutt, *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood, and the Flights of Refugees From Bhutan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

17. Particularly useful in discussing this movement: David Scott Palmer, ed., *The Shining Path of Peru*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992; and "The Revolutionary Terrorism of Peru's Shining Path," in Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, pp. 249-308; Steve J. Stern, ed., *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998; Gordon H. McCormick, *From Sierra to the Cities: The Urban Campaign of the Shining Path*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1992; and Gustavo Gorriti, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999. For my own work, see, e.g., "Making Revolution: Sendero Luminoso in Peru as Maoist Conclusion, 1980-," Ch. 5, in my *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, pp. 253-284, and "Making Revolution With Shining Path," Ch. 10, in Palmer, *The Shining Path of Peru*, pp. 191-205. Possibly the single most cited essay comparing the cases of Peru and Nepal is R. Andrew Nickson, "Democratisation and the Growth of Communism in Nepal: A Peruvian Scenario in the Making?" *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. XXX/No. 3, November 1992, pp. 358-386. I am indebted to Nickson for an elaboration upon the article's contents during a discussion in Asuncion, Paraguay, August 15, 1993.

18. Key works include: S. Banerjee, *India's Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising*, London: Zed Press, 1984; E. Duyker, *Tribal Guerrillas: The Santals of West Bengal and the Naxalite Movement*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987; and A. K. Samana, *Left Extremist Movement in West Bengal: An Experiment in Armed Agrarian Struggle*, Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1984. Particularly good at placing the Naxalites within regional development context is Partha Chatterjee, *The Present History of West Bengal: Essays in Political Criticism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

19. To include West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The most vibrant of these are People's War Group (PWG) of Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) of Bihar, both CCOMPOSA members.

20. Both were born in 1954 and entered politics in their university years. Prachanda earned a graduate degree (MA) in agriculture; Bhattarai (Ph.D.) in urban planning; his wife, Hishila Yemi, is an architect/engineer and also a member of the Maoists. Both have been widely quoted as advocating social transformation through violence—Bhattarai is credited with the intellectual authorship of the

"Class Enemy Elimination Campaign" launched in 1996. Asked for personal details by Tiwari, *op.cit.*, he replied,

As per your query about my individual background, you can take me as a typical representative of a Third World educated youth of peasant background, who finds the gross inequality, oppression, poverty, underdevelopment and exploitation of the overwhelming majority of the population in a class-divided and imperialism-dominated world just intolerable, and grasps Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the best scientific tool to change it positively.

21. Fieldwork in the important district of Gorkha (from which the term "Gurkha" is derived) revealed, as per police statistics for the period November 2001-March 2002, that fully 40 percent of those arrested were teachers, 79 of 196. *Field Notes*, March 2002.

22. Impressionistic analysis of admittedly incomplete data indicates that one-fifth to one-third of the cadre and combatants may be women.

23. Contesting the May 12, 1991, Parliamentary elections as the United Peoples' Front of Nepal, or UPFN, the Maoists won nine seats of the 205: one from the Eastern Region, Siraha; four from the Central Region, Ramechhap, Kavrepalanchok, Lalitpur, Chitwan; and four from the Mid-Western Region, Rukhum, Rolpa x 2, Humla. This is a fascinating mix of some of the most and least educated areas of the country. By comparison, the Nepali Congress captured 110 seats, the Nepal Communist Party, United Marxist-Leninist, the "legal left," 69 seats.

24. A "big landlord" in the hills, for instance, may be a man with two hectares of land; but objectively this does not fit the definition of such. The point is fundamental, for if the essence of the Nepal's problems lie, as they do, in the population exceeding the carrying capacity of the land, no ideological restructuring can adequately address issues of livelihood. The result is bound to be, as it was in Cambodia, tragedy.

25. A preliminary analysis of all Maoist civilian victims of terror actions in 2002 produced 323 names, 145 of which could be identified as Brahmin, Chhetri, or 44.9 percent. Of the remaining 178 names, 52 were tribals (16.1 percent), called "ethnic community members," and 82 could not be identified (25.4 percent). These four categories amounted to 86.4 percent. Victims are virtually all male. Their numbers are exceeded by the number of security force dead, especially the police.

26. The tension that does exist appears to stem from a logical source: the



high proportion of hill tribe manpower in combat formations. Many of these foot-soldiers see themselves as involved in a self-defense dynamic as opposed to an ideological crusade. Thus they must be dealt with carefully by the leadership as it engages in the tactical maneuvering so typical of a Leninist organization.

27. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003. This conclusion is based upon numerous interviews with Maoist combatants in Rolpa. It may be further noted that each battalion also has a Vice Commissar with equivalent powers to the Chief Commissar.

28. Student and ethnic liberation groups are most active in the united front campaign. The latter have not proved particularly vibrant, but the former function openly and appear to execute instructions issued by the CPN(M) leadership. Prominent is the All Nepal National Independent Students' Union, Revolutionary or ANNISU-R.

29. For the benchmark work of theory with respect to this dynamic, see James C. Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution: Peasants and Commissars," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 7/Nos. 1 & 2, January-March 1979, pp. 97-134. Scott, of course, is the author of the seminal *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.

30. This is an important issue, because the limited scholarly work produced to date has relied principally upon "circular" journalistic accounts of actual events, the result being that hearsay has taken on a life of its own. One police operation, in particular ("Kilo Sierra II," June 1998) is now consistently cited as mobilizing hill people in self-defense; but its particulars are normally conflated with other operations, such as the earlier "Romeo," November 1995, which are then arrayed as if a consistent pattern of systemic repression. Examination of contemporaneous data, though, such as the field reports for "Romeo," (*Field Notes*, November 2001) raises questions as to what occurred objectively—quite a different issue from what occurred subjectively. Subjective issues can not be ignored and may be crucial in any insurgency; for instance, what could seem to be limited repression objectively might nevertheless subjectively be perceived as substantial. Yet consideration, when dealing with a voluntarist movement, must be given to the possibility that limited, even unexceptional, actions can be exploited through shrewd ideological campaign by insurgents.

31. Available figures on CPN(M) strength do not inspire confidence, but government estimates provided in early 2003 would seem reasonable: 5,500 combatants; 8,000 militia; 4,500 cadres, referred to in Nepalese English as "cah-dres"; 33,000 hard core followers; and 200,000 sympathizers.

32. See especially Anne de Sales, "The Kham Magar Country: Between Ethnic Claims and Maoism," in David N. Gellner, *Resistance and the State: Nepalese*

*Experiences*, New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2003, pp. 326-57. There are five separate groupings within the general Magar category.

33. *Field work*, Rolpa, April-May 2003.

34. Local variations make generalization risky, but extortion, classified by the Maoists as "revolutionary taxation," appears "reasonable" in an objective sense. Small shopkeepers in Rolpa, for instance, have cited payments of NPR 50 per month (about US\$66 cents); government personnel remaining in "liberated" areas (e.g., teachers, postmen) pay amounts equal to one day's wages per month. NPR 100-200 (US\$1.32-\$2.64) was often cited by teachers who were making approximately NPR 7,500 per month, roughly US\$98. Reports of excess from collecting cadres are comparatively rare. In contrast, kidnapping-for-ransom is common—despite efforts by the Maoist hierarchy to deny such activity—and far more arbitrary. The amounts frequently are steep by the standards of rural Nepal. A case, not atypical, in Rolpa involved a small innkeeper held until ransomed by his family for NPR 30,000, or nearly US\$400. He subsequently fled to India, leaving his family adrift. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003. Equally lucrative for the movement, of course, is extortion from businesses associated with the commercial economy. A typical trekking group of foreigners, for instance, was stopped in October 2001 but allowed to proceed once the guide had paid NPR 2,000 (about US\$26), a normal amount and an order of magnitude greater than what can be gained in taxing the impoverished population. In the case just cited, a receipt was issued, and the trek reported no further demands. *Field Notes*, December 2001.

35. E.g., government statistics for the first several days of the November 2001 offensive put losses to CPN(M) bank-robberies at some US\$2 million. *Field Notes*, November 2001. No reliable data exists on total CPN(M) funding, but the annual intake would appear to be but several millions.

36. Only in Phase 3—when mobile warfare gives way to the so-called "war of position"—do the insurgents endeavor to hold ground.

37. *Field Notes*, May 2002.

38. This was not only an administrative blow but a key step in establishing Maoist political dominance, for VDC candidates were affiliated with the major political parties. The result was that the legal left bore the brunt of the Maoist assault, since some 2,600 VDC Chairmen of the 3,913 possible were UML members. *Ibid.*

39. *Field Notes*, November 2002. The first year of the Maoist offensive (November 2001-November 2002) saw 1,321 VDC buildings completely destroyed, according to government figures, as per the following breakdown by regions: Far West, 316 of 383, 82.5 percent; Mid-Western, 165 of 575, 28.7 percent; Western, 221

of 865, 25.5 percent; Central, 334 of 1,199, 27.8 percent; and Eastern, 285 of 893, 31.9 percent. VDC continued to be destroyed at such a clip, though, that the statistics were already surpassed at time of release.

40. *Ibid.*

41. It is significant that leaders steadfastly maintain no inspiration from (or knowledge of) the Khmer Rouge case. It is ironic, then, as per Bhattarai to Tiwari, *op.cit.*, to read a claim such as: "There is no independent and authentic account of events in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge available so far. Whatever is emanating from the Western media appears to be highly exaggerated to us." Such, of course, is an untenable position which ranks with "Holocaust Denial" but is representative of many ad hoc CPN(M) pronouncements. Essential reading on the Khmer Rouge would include: Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996; and *How Pol Pot Came to Power: A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930-1975*, London: Verso, 1985; David P. Chandler, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992; and David P. Chandler, *Voices From S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999; Kenneth Quinn, "Political Change in Wartime: The Khmer Krahom Revolution Southern Cambodia, 1970-1974," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 28, Spring, pp. 3-31; Kenneth Quinn, *The Origins and Development of Radical Cambodian Communism*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1982; Karl D. Jackson, ed., *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous With Death*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989; Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999; and Elizabeth Becker, *When the War Was Over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution*, New York: Public Affairs, 1986.

42. By the declaration of the recent ceasefire in late January 2003, an apparent 21 assassinations had been carried out in the Kathmandu Valley, to include two Nepalese security personnel employed by the U.S. Embassy. The goal of united front activity, as per Bhattarai to Tiwari (*op.cit.*), is transparent:

In the current triangular balance of forces—namely (among) the monarchists, parliamentary democrats and revolutionary democrats—if the latter two democratic forces are able to mount a joint struggle against the feudal aristocratic forces, there are strong chances that democracy will be consummated in the country in the near future.

43. In a move that increased the vacuum of authority in rural areas, the authorities systematically confiscated weapons—most for hunting—from the populace. Examination of security force statistics citing "weapons captured" reveals a predominance of "musket guns." Best evidence indicates these are weapons confiscated from civilians and not pieces actually captured from guerrillas.

---

44. *Field Notes*, November 2002. The force was rapidly expanding and likely has already reached its anticipated strength of 25,000.

45. In contrast, a total of 850 civilians are listed as having been killed since the declaration of people's war on February 13, 1996.

46. Data which follow are from my *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

47. *Ibid.* Local records could not provide total police strength in the years under discussion, but it clearly was but in the hundreds. Even today, there are but 300 police personnel assigned to the district.

48. Though such detailed figures are not available for the country as a whole, my data indicates that of 1,682 stations total, 895 (or 53.2 percent) have been "consolidated" with other stations, i.e., abandoned, leaving just 787 stations remaining. *Field Notes*, August 2003.

49. In Rolpa, the VDC heads numbered 51, affiliated with the major parties as follows: UML, 23; NC, 18; RPP (the successors to the conservative backers of the old panchayet regime, 8; and Independent, 2. *Ibid.*

50. In one village studied, there were but three cadres, well-known to villagers. They were normally referred to as the Opportunist, the Criminal, and the Young Lenin. The first was a former Nepali Congress (NC) member who, following his own kidnap and ransom, had become a Maoist, apparently to safeguard the family property. Other members of his family, having moved to the tarai, remained prominent NC politicians. The second had spent 10 months in jail for his previous Maoist activities and had been released under the terms of the ceasefire. He was the most dangerous of the lot and was eager for "payback." The third was a high school student who effected Leninist dress and seemed a true believer. Yet he attended classes faithfully and, according to his instructors, caused no difficulties. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

51. The Opportunist discussed above, for instance, had 7 months prior to my arrival accused the village postman of being a spy and had summoned a section (i.e. squad) of guerrillas who had taken the man away, bound. He has disappeared, despite the efforts of his family (a wife and four children) to locate him. Likewise, the Criminal worked closely with guerrillas in the area and regularly threatened villagers, at one point telling a teacher that but for the ceasefire, he was dead. Finally, the Young Lenin, despite all his admirable characteristics—and probably precisely because of his clean-cut, wholesome appearance—had apparently been tapped to make regular trips to Kathmandu to work with surveillance teams preparing targets for the urban terror campaign. *Ibid.*

52. RNA captain, *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

53. Census figures (projections) put the 2001 population of Dolakha at 204,229, of whom a plurality were Chhetri (58,183), or 28.5 percent. Another 18,791 (9.2 percent) were Hill Brahmins; 27,619 (13.5 percent) were Tamang; and just 3,392 (1.7 percent) were Magars. Yet guerrilla units in the area were visibly dominated by the latter and drew support from Magar communities.

54. All communications observed, whether between cadres and guerrillas, or within and between guerrilla units, were by hard copy message. There is widespread presence in hill areas of transistor radios, indicating lack of familiarity with technology is not an issue. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

55. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003. It is noteworthy that efforts to draw guerrillas into discussions concerning their relationship to terror actions invariably led to responses such as: "Lower level party cadres are involved in such actions, not the battalions. We just fight." This could well have been true, since it was neither possible to establish affiliation of guerrillas observed engaging in enforcement activities (during field work in Rolpa) nor to determine the extent of independent guerrilla formations outside the battalion structure. It was noted that half-sections and sections from battalions were constantly moving through the hills, and this accords with villager descriptions of such-sized units carrying out terror actions.

56. Captured weapons predominate, with the most common high-powered firearm being the .303 Lee Enfield taken from the police. SLRs taken from the RNA are uncommon enough to be relegated to leadership figures, such as Section Leaders. Efforts to tap the extensive arms black market in South Asia have apparently met with minimal success. There is evidence of attempts to look further afield, though. One intercepted shipment of high-powered firearms was coming from Burma. There have been reports of corrupt Chinese officials also providing surplus weapons for a price. *Ibid.*

57. The dimensions of this phenomenon are difficult to assess. INSEC's *Human Rights Yearbook 2003* (p. vii) lists 17,564 displaced persons for 2002, a modest figure which would seem too low. As CDO (Chief District Officer) Rolpa, Tejprasad Paudel, noted, when commenting on the high number of passports his office had been issuing daily: "And you do not even need a passport to go to India. Lots of people have been leaving." My own observation in western Rolpa counted roughly 20 percent of the houses abandoned in villages. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

58. *Field Notes*, November 2002. Precise figure at the time was given as 54,245. This has apparently increased.

59. Taking the figures detailed so far, the Maoists have killed at least 2,187

individuals; 50 percent (1,093) have been police, another 11.1 percent (244) RNA, and the remaining 38.9 percent (850) civilians. Figures (dead) for the "people's war" phase of the Peruvian case, 1980-92 (the latter date marked the capture of *Sendero Luminoso* leader Guzman and other top cadre), are: police, 1,369; armed forces, 909; civilians, 10,640. See Palmer in Crenshaw, p. 271.

60. This figure, the present highest estimate, must be used with a great deal of caution. Perhaps 3,000 of the deaths are attributed to the Maoists, INSEC counts only 2,021 in its 2002 report, the remainder to the security forces. Ironically, the 5,000+ does tally reasonably with the government's own released figures for enemy killed-in-action, but efforts to validate these have run up against a serious level of misstatement and exaggeration. In one case, a report of 21 dead Maoists was found, upon investigation by Western observers, to involve but two actual bodies. The justification for the higher count was that the guerrillas were seen to have been hit. *Field Notes*, February 2002. The irony is that cause-oriented groups appear to take the 5,000+ figure at face value and then use limited, impressionistic evidence to put an actual figure to the number of those killed in error—and thus having their human rights violated. Amnesty International claims more than 50 percent are innocents. Regardless, it is significant that in the entire 1980-92 period in Peru as cited above, deaths of presumed subversives (10,655) tallied but twice the count Nepal has produced in essentially a year. Peruvian figures have recently been revised upwards, but the Nepalese deaths have likewise leaped.

61. British figures for only November 23, 2001, to October 23, 2002, cite the following losses: police, 456 dead, 358 wounded; RNA, 208 dead, 189 wounded; civilians attacked by Maoists, 304 dead, 191 wounded; and presumed subversives, 4,434 dead, "heavy" wounded. This total of 5,402, if compared to 8,000 (an estimate, to be sure) yields 67.5 percent. *Field Notes*, November 2002.

62. Now dated but still useful is Bishwa Keshar Maskay and Dev Raj Dahal, eds, *Nepal's Participation in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations*, Kathmandu: United Nations Association of Nepal, 1995.

63. *Field Notes*, November 2001.

64. See especially Sukumar Basu, "The Role of Intelligence in Conducting a Counterinsurgency Campaign Against the Maoist Rebels in Nepal," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, London, forthcoming. My own research has found the police consistently to be best informed as to local realities. Indeed, the intelligence center set up in 2002 as a section of operations in police headquarters, Kathmandu, is as close to that required in counterinsurgency as exists in Nepal. *Field Notes*, November 2002.

65. The concept of an All Source Intelligence Center (ASIC) at the lowest possible tactical levels, a staple of Western (especially U.S. and British) security force procedures, has not yet entered the Nepalese organizational architecture,

this despite extensive efforts by, in particular, the British. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

66. Until early 2003, the Civil Police had primacy in the defense of the Kathmandu Valley. This has recently been passed to the RNA. Other urban areas, though, remain principally a police responsibility.

67. This is in sharp contrast to Nepalese performance, both of individuals and units, in Gurkha and United Nations service. What is crucial, of course, is that these experiences occur outside the Nepali cultural matrix as given tangible form in societal structure.

68. A step he was forced to repeat in June 2003, when the first "caretaker" prime minister resigned.

69. Tiwari.

70. Background and discussion in SAP-Nepal (South Asia Partnership), *Quest for Peace*, 2nd ed., Kathmandu, 2003.

71. The CPN(M) draws heavily upon Lenin's work in its calculations, an orientation reflected recently in what appears to be a conscious effort by senior party members to imitate Lenin's mode of dress, in contrast to earlier efforts to imitate Chinese or Khmer Rouge models. This mode stands in sharp contrast to more traditional Nepalese forms, especially the use of the worker's cap instead of the ubiquitous *topi*. For the life of Lenin, cf. Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000; on context, Hans Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution 1881-1917*, New York: Longman, 1983. On the revolution, see Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1995; and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, rev. ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Specific discussion of urban space is Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1976. Discussion of the manner in which urban modes of organization and discourse found their way into rural space in the years before the Bolshevik coup is found in Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987. For the civil war, see W. Bruce Lincoln, *Red Victory: A History of the Russian Civil War*, New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1989. Possibly the best insight into Lenin's thought comes from a novel, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Lenin in Zurich*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.

72. Readily available; see, e.g., "75 Points of the Maoists," *New Business Age* (Kathmandu), May 2003, pp. 28-33.

---

73. Bhattarai to Tiwari, is instructive in this regard:

Our party, our party Chairman Prachanda, and our various publications have time and again stressed that our immediate political agenda is to consummate a democratic republic in the country. Please note that we are not pressing for a “communist republic” but a bourgeois democratic republic. For that we have advanced the immediate slogans of a round-table conference of all the political forces, an interim government and elections to a constituent assembly, which have been increasingly endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the population. As the constituent assembly is the highest manifestation of bourgeois democracy in history, we fail to understand why anybody claiming to be a democrat would shy away from this.

74. Particularly useful, amid the myriad works devoted to the Ulster conflict and the IRA/PIRA, is Richard English, *Armed Struggle: A History of the IRA*, London: Macmillan, 2003. His discussion focuses upon insurgent intentions and calculations in the struggle.

75. I base this formulation upon discussions with Maoist leadership figures during field work, April-May 2003, especially an interview with the second figure in the hierarchy, Baburam Bhattarai, May 13, 2003, Kathmandu.

76. Interview with Baburam Bhattarai.

77. Baburam Bhattarai, *The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure of Nepal: A Marxist Analysis*, Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2003.

78. *Field Notes*, April-May 2003.

79. A telling illustration is provided by the pantheon given pride of place at Maoist functions: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Prachanda. That the public veneration of (at least) several mass murderers might be taken as chilling testimony that a new “Kampuchea” in the making is simply not understood by the Maoist hierarchy. The legal Nepalese left, it may be noted, suffers from the same myopia.



**U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE**

**Major General David H. Huntoon, Jr.  
Commandant**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE**

**Director  
Professor Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr.**

**Director of Research  
Dr. Steven Metz**

**Author  
Dr. Thomas A. Marks**

**Director of Publications  
Ms. Marianne P. Cowling**

**Publications Assistant  
Ms. Rita A. Rummel**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Composition  
Ms. Gretchen S. Smith**